

From: [City Council](#)
To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Cc: [Oriana Hart](#); [Erik Billing](#); [John Jay](#); [Jane Riley](#); [Torran Korman](#); [Victoria Henkel](#)
Subject: FW: We Must Preserve Community Tennis at Ragle Ranch Park
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 9:31:44 AM
Attachments: [letter2officials3.pdf](#)

Please see email submitted to the City of Sebastopol

BCC:Email BCC to City Council and City Attorney

City staff who have also received this email are included into the CC as shown above. PW: Please post as public comment.

Mary Gourley

City Manager

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From: Gulliver Elgato [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 8:25 AM
To: bos@sonomacounty.gov; Lynda.Hopkins@sonoma-county.org; City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>; parks@sonomacounty.gov; bert.whitaker@sonoma-county.org; david.robinson@sonoma-county.org; parkspublicmeetings@sonoma-county.org
Subject: We Must Preserve Community Tennis at Ragle Ranch Park

We are Ragle Ranch Tennis, formerly the West County Tennis Association, and we built the Ragle Ranch Tennis Courts almost entirely with volunteer contributions and have maintained them with contributions and volunteer efforts for the past thirty years with minimal taxpayer funding. We are seeking renewal of our existing contract to maintain this unique local community based tennis-only facility for the next five years.

We respectfully submit the following document explaining our rationale, who we are and what we do.

Sincerely,
Ragle Ranch Tennis

Ragle Ranch Tennis Association Sebastopol, CA. May 19, 2026

PO Box 1010, Sebastopol, California

Ragleranchtennis.org

Re: We Must Preserve the Ragle Ranch Tennis as a Dedicated Tennis Facility

To: Sonoma County Parks, Sonoma County Supervisors, Sebastopol City Council

The Ragle Ranch Tennis Courts were built by the local tennis community, they are maintained by the local tennis community and must remain dedicated to the purpose for which public contributions were originally made.

Introduction & Purpose — We are the Ragle Ranch Tennis Association, formerly the West County Tennis Association; we built and we have maintained the tennis courts at Ragle Ranch Park under contract with Sonoma County for thirty years with minimal county funds and request our contract to be renewed when it comes up in 2028. The Ragle Ranch tennis courts are free and open to the public without reservations.

Community Investment & Ownership — Our unique 4 court tennis facility was built with an amazing public/government partnership with almost 100% private contributions. Two contractors who contributed time, labor and materials are on the board, Jon Carroll and Bruce Nachtigall. Replacement cost is about \$700,000 and maintenance is about \$10,000 annually for a total of \$300,000 maintenance over the lifetime of the contract. There has been an implied covenant with the local community that financial and volunteer support will keep these four courts dedicated to tennis. This has resulted in very generous past and ongoing support.

The Threat — We know the pickleball community is aggressively pressuring to grab these courts for that trendy sport. The two sports using the same facility do not co-exist well. At Finley Park is an example, there is little tennis played. At the Occidental courts pickleball encroachment makes tennis nearly impossible, the courts are dangerously substandard, without the required 12' separation between courts. The county may be liable when an accident happens. Santa Rosa is building separate courts for pickleball at Galvin and Howarth Parks.

Ragle Ranch Tennis Is Unique — The Ragle Ranch Tennis courts are unique in West County and are well maintained by volunteers. USTA matches are played there, impossible if pickleball is on the courts since four tennis courts are required for USTA matches. The Ragle Ranch Tennis hosts adult programs and free youth programs and lessons for individuals and groups. This becomes completely infeasible with pickleball on any courts. It will be impossible to attract contributions, USTA league matches or run teaching programs without four courts. Substantial community money, time and material has been donated to build and maintain the tennis courts, this all ends with a degraded facility because the maintenance funding will not be there. Ragle Ranch Tennis is local and the new board is energetically pursuing additional membership.

Alternatives — Many other alternatives for pickleball venues are nearby so there is no need to destroy Ragle Ranch Tennis. How about a dedicated pickleball facility in Ragle Park using the same public/government arrangement that developed Ragle? Pickleball courts are now two blocks away on the street by Brookhaven School property that state law says must be open for public use unless it impacts instruction.

We Ask — We request an extension of the existing tennis-only contract for five years to preserve this amazing resource that was built by our community. Ragle Ranch Tennis has met the terms of the existing contracts for 30 years. We anticipate contributions and commitments from individuals and organizations will cover resurfacing and maintenance without county taxpayer money to preserve four courts tennis-only as in our existing contract.

Ragle Ranch Tennis, Sebastopol, California

Additional Details

- Alternative Location- An excellent pickleball location in Ragle Ranch Park is between Soccer Field 2 and Soccer Field 4 by the pond shown in the map below. This location is close to the restrooms, parking, it's accessible and preserves the unique Ragle Ranch tennis facility. It is also far from neighbors complaining about noise that have closed pickleball courts elsewhere. There are many other possible locations within Ragle Ranch Park for pickleball, some may even be better. This is an excellent project for the upcoming Parks bond issue that will thereby draw support from both the tennis and pickleball communities. Two tennis courts are about the size of four pickleball courts and are show in the modified map below. Why not plan for this?



Refurbishing the tennis courts at El Molino School in Forestville into a tennis/pickleball facility is another alternative.

- Here is a photo of the courts at Occidental. The spacing between the tennis and pickleball is less than the required 12' court spacing. This has effectively eliminated tennis from Occidental. We don't want this to happen at the Ragle Tennis Courts. An injury plus a clever lawyer will result in liability for the county. Oddly enough, the tennis net and posts are still up between the pickleball courts, another danger. It's not personal, the two sports are just not compatible on the same court surface as many towns have found.

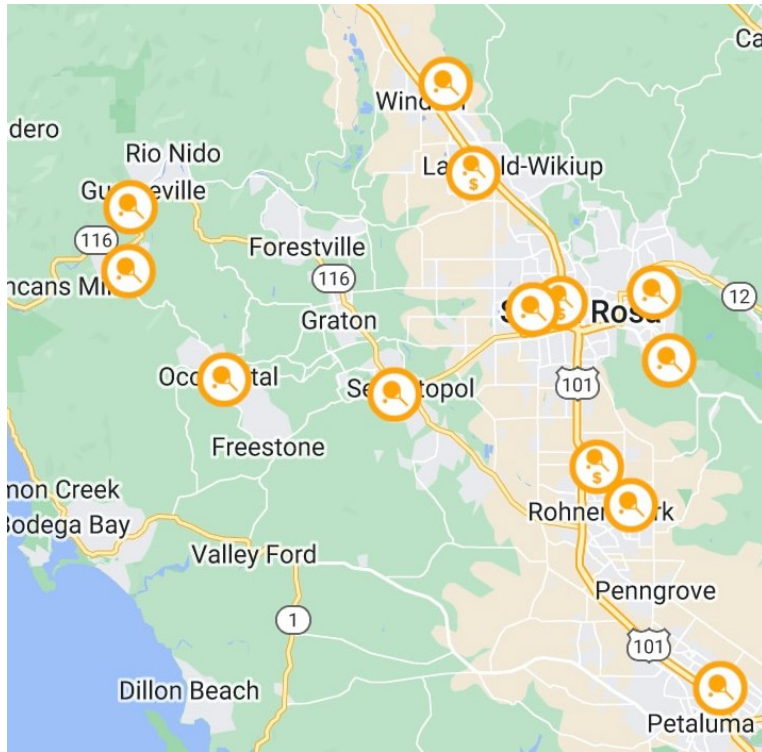


Here are a few more photos showing why pickleball and tennis don't coexist. Top left the pickleball bags are hanging from the fence, contrary to the spirit of the rules on the top right. Are the tennis players really expected to confront the pickleballers as ask them to move? Does that encourage or discourage young people from using the tennis courts? Is that the plan? Bottom left is more of the same, pickleballers with their chairs on the tennis courts. See the rules, top right. This is why Galvin Park, Howarth Park, and the tennis facility in Windsor have separated tennis and pickleball facilities. It also illustrates why Martinez has eliminated pickleball entirely.



- Health and Safety – Studies show playing tennis regularly can improve cardiovascular health, increase muscle strength, and enhance flexibility and coordination. It also helps reduce stress, boosts mental well-being, and may even add years to your life. In what has become a landmark comparison of sports and life expectancy, [researchers from the Copenhagen City Heart Study](#) found that playing tennis may add nearly a decade (9.7 years) to one's lifespan.

- There are already many many pickleball courts in Sonoma County, see the map from the Pickleball Association below. Ragle Ranch is the only dedicated tennis facility in West County. Why is yet another pickleball venue required at the expense of tennis at Ragle Ranch Park?



- Aside from the right and wrong of abandoning a successful long running public/government partnership, the county should consider the additional taxpayer cost it will incur maintaining the Ragle Ranch courts by itself. A degraded facility will not attract the contributions and volunteers necessary to do ongoing maintenance and promote tennis. The county will either take over maintenance or allow the courts to deteriorate. In a few years tennis courts severely deteriorate without constant maintenance. Take a look at the courts at Sonoma State University to see what abandoned courts look like after a few years.

The courts at Ragle Ranch Park are quite busy. Almost all mornings, the courts are filled with tennis players from 8AM until noon. Many of the players are with groups that have been playing together for years. Afternoons are less busy but tennis lessons are conducted till 5PM four days a week. On days following a rain members of Ragle Ranch Tennis roll the courts to dry them so play can begin early. The Brookhaven courts open at 2PM for pickleball during school days. If the county has been told the Ragle Ranch Courts are underutilized, they have been misled. Is it the county's intent to end tennis at Ragle? Is the two hour window from the courts freeing up until Brookhaven opening worth destroying tennis at Ragle?

- History – When the courts were to be built, Jon Carroll, Rich McRay from the county and Rich Cardiff agreed the courts were to be dedicated to tennis in perpetuity.

Ragle Ranch Tennis has installed plants, landscaping, built the pergola, put in the benches, seating, nets, windscreens and the shed. The nets and windscreens are replaced as needed paid for by Ragle Ranch Tennis and when possible the work is done by volunteers. The county does not pay for this, the county taxpayers money is saved. This facility is made available to the public.

- Tennis in its current form has been around for about 160 years teaching sportsmanship, grace and court etiquette. One lesson of tennis is not to steal other's courts. Pickleball is new and popular and of course sporting goods manufacturers like "churn" - get everyone to buy equipment for a new sport every five years. Who remembers racquetball and platform tennis? Many towns on the East Coast built expensive platform tennis courts, much like padel, that were abandoned after a few years.

- Noise Pickleball can be a noise nuisance for neighbors due to its sharp, repetitive "pop" sound from hard plastic balls and paddles, which is impulsive and travels farther than tennis noise. Studies report that the 55-decibel annoyance threshold can extend up to 500 feet along the court's length. Many communities have removed pickleball courts close to residential areas. In Martinez, Ca the City Council voted to permanently close pickleball courts that opened only a year ago that attracted sometimes unruly crowds and resulted in complaints from neighbors about noise and crowds. On Sept., 24 the city had reduced the hours the courts were open for public use resulting in pickleballers breaking in to play. Is this what Sonoma County wants?

More than 30 pickleball courts in Seattle could be removed under a proposal by the city's Parks and Recreation department, which now aims to separate pickleball and tennis facilities. This plan would reduce the number of public pickleball courts from 92 to 56 across several neighborhoods.

According to pickleballcosts.com, pickleball courts must be located more than 600 feet away from residential zones or properties used for residential purposes to avoid being subject to specific regulations, such as noise ordinances. Courts within this distance may face restrictions due to noise impacts on nearby homes. How does the Ragle neighborhood feel about the potential for noisy pickleball right by their homes? We will find out as soon we ask them!

As mentioned, Santa Rosa is now in the process of converting the courts at Galvin and Howarth Parks to separate tennis and pickleball. At Hiram Lewis Park in Windsor what were 4 tennis courts were relined for pickleball. This was abandoned in favor of five separate pickleball courts about 50 yards away and the tennis courts were resurfaced and relined for tennis only. All these communities have shown that combined tennis/pickleball facilities don't work, just like the photos for the Occidental courts above. The most efficient path is for Sonoma County Parks to pull the band-aid off and step up and build a pickleball only facility and leave Ragle Ranch Tennis to the tennis community that built it and maintains it.

Let Sonoma County stay ahead of the curve and not waste taxpayer money mixing tennis and pickleball that won't work and will have to be redone in a few years. Learn from the experience of others.

- Ragle Ranch Tennis Activities - In late 2025 older members retired and the board of Ragle Ranch Tennis (formerly West County Tennis Association) was infused with new members with new ideas and this rejuvenated board has brought exciting ideas and developments to the tennis community, including new programs, graphics, merch and a website. We contacted the Sebastopol Times and were featured in a recent article by their reporter Rollie Atkinson. We are increasing membership especially locally here in West County. Attached below is a schedule of events copied from our website, westcountytennis.org. We look forward to the county helping us promote these events. More events coming in the future!

Ragle Ranch Tennis is working with the Analy High School tennis coach Monte DeLozier to establish a feeder program for future tennis players including a free intro to tennis for youths of all ages.

From the Ragle Ranch Tennis website:

FREE JUNIOR TENNIS CLINICS At Ragle Ranch Tennis with Professional Tennis Instructor SAM LEVY

Saturday, June 20 and Saturday, July 25 from 12:00pm to 2:00pm. Please join us! No cost and no experience necessary.

Get to know the premier tennis-only facility in Sonoma County.

Come out, hit some balls, play some games, win some prizes and **HAVE FUN!**

06/27/26 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM All courts Celebrating Benji Aguirre, Sebastopol Tennis Icon

Ongoing Weekly Activities

Beginning the week of June 8

Monday 1:30-3:00

Drills and point play clinic(3.0 + up)

Members: \$20 Non-members: \$40

Tuesday 5:30-dark

Open singles play

Member benefit

Wednesday 5:30-dark

Fly by Doubles

Member benefit

Thursday 9:30-10:30

Intro to tennis or return to present day(sorry, no wooden racquets)

Member: \$30 Non-member: \$40

Look for our Friday evening mixers coming soon

6/15/26 – 8/6/26 Mon and Wed 4 – 5 PM 1+ courts Beginner Summer Jr Tennis Programs Age 6-9

See the Programs Page to Sign Up !

6/15/26 – 8/6/26 Mon and Wed 3 – 4 PM 1+ courts Intermediate Summer Jr Tennis Programs Age 9 – 16

See the Programs Page to Sign Up!

6/15/26 – 8/6/26 Tues and Thurs 3 – 4:30 PM 1+ courts HS/Competitive Summer Jr Tennis Programs Age 12 – 18

See the Programs Page to Sign UP!

Signed, Ragle Ranch Tennis

Jon Carroll, President

Dr. John W. Cruz, Vice President

Virginia Lambrix, Secretary

Pat Hannan, Treasurer

Bruce Nachtigall, Board

Pam Nachtigall, Board

Lauren West, Board

Jeff Kahn, Board

Sam Levy, Board

Anita Sauber, Member

Bob Phelps, Member